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ABSTRACT

A commission on public relations education, consisting of four educators and four practitioners, met to deliberate and design a model for public relations education. The stated goals of the commission were to examine requirements for the professional practice of public relations, to relate these requirements to education, and to issue recommendations concerning the manner in which education for public relations may be improved. Inherent in the commission's recommendations are the following basic assumptions: students need a well-rounded education in the liberal arts, humanities, communication, and public relations; specialized education at the master's degree level is desirable; and the appropriate place for public relations education is a school or department of journalism. In addition to its curriculum recommendations, the commission presents recommendations concerning public relations educators, relations between public relations practitioners and educators, public relations research, and the need to develop a formalized process for shifting from campus study to the field of practice. (RL)

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A Design For Public Relations Education

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Public Relations Division of the

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and the

Public Relations Society of America

—

1975

The Report of the

Commission on Public Relations Education

CS 203 813

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Prefatory Note

The Recommended Curriculum report of the Commission on Public Relations Education was presented to the Public Relations Division of the Association for Education in Journalism at the AEJ Annual Convention at Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada.

At a formal meeting on August 18, 1975, the AEJ Public Relations Division acted on the Report, with a strong endorsement of the recommended curriculum. However, action was postponed on the last brief section on "Moving from Campus to Practice," since this was not strictly related to curriculum.

The Public Relations Division commended the Commission for its landmark Report.

The Commission on Public Relations Education was initially established in 1973 by the then president of the PR Division, Dr. Frazier Moore of the University of Georgia. Subsequently, the Board of Directors of the Public Relations Society of America authorized PRSA to join in the sponsorship of the Commission. The Commission completed its work during the PR Division presidency of Professor Doug Newsom of Texas Christian University.

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The Report of the Commission on Public Relations Education

INTRODUCTION

The Commission on Public Relations Education was established by official sanction of the Public Relations Division of AEJ in August, 1973, at the annual meeting of the Division. Subsequently, with the consent of the chairman of the PR Division, the Board of Directors of the Public Relations Society of America agreed to act as co-sponsor of the Commission.

The goal of the Commission may be simply stated as follows:

(1) To examine the requirements for the professional practice of public relations in the United States in business corporations, public administration, trade and professional associations, governmental agencies and nonprofit institutions and to relate these requirements to educational standards, and

(2) to issue recommendations concerning the manner in which education for public relations may be improved, not only to meet the needs of the profession but also to effect ultimate improvement in the professional practice itself.

The Commission on PR Education was established as the result of a paper commenting on the unsatisfactory and disparate state of public relations education in U.S. colleges and universities, delivered to the PR Division of AEJ at its 1973 meeting by J. Carroll Bateman and Professor Scott M. Cutlip.

To place in proper perspective what follows in this report, it is advisable to quote from the Bateman-Cutlip paper:

> *We live in an age when the managers of human institutions more than ever before require a greater sensitivity to an increasingly articulate public opinion. We live in an age that has come to accept the idea of "social responsibility" on the part of all public enterprises. We have seen and are seeing vast and continuing reactions to the insensitivity of management: the consumer protection movement; the concern for the pollution of land, water and air; the legislation dealing with job safety (O.S.H.A.), with highway safety, with additives and pollutants in foods, with greater humanization of work forces—in short, the concern for the quality of life in America.*
>
> *Business public relations was born out of earlier adverse reactions of the public and its spokesmen—legislators, muckrakers and the press—in the early years of the twentieth century, and was fostered by the Great Depression. In these early years promotional publicity also developed as a tool in business. Simultaneously public information programs were being developed in*

government and in educational institutions to promote public understanding and support. Utilization of this communication-liaison function was greatly accelerated by developments in World War I and World War II. The need for qualified, competent, professional assistance in this field was never greater than it is today. Yet the heavy hand of the past—its publicity genesis—still dominates public relations practice today when our divided society cries out for communication, conciliation and community. Call it "public relations", "public affairs", "corporate communications", or whatever you will, the need for trained persons in this area is likely to increase in coming decades, as our society becomes even more complex.

Yet, we have already witnessed and are witnessing today a dearth of professional public relations practitioners capable of operating at the higher executive levels in all institutions—public and private—where their counsel is needed. The number of qualified people in public relations is incapable of meeting the demand for competent practitioners. Generally speaking, most of those in public relations work today were not specifically educated for this type of career. They are "retreads" from other fields of communication. Most of the present leaders in the field of public relations are self-taught in the practice, usually as the result of on-the-job training in a highly literal sense.

In the last quarter-century, more and more institutions of higher learning have turned their attention to public relations as a field of study. To a very considerable extent, courses in public relations are offered on an elective basis at the undergraduate level. Many of these courses, however, are taught by instructors who themselves are not fully qualified in the theory and practice of public relations. Comparatively few colleges and universities offer degree programs in public relations at the undergraduate level, and fewer still an opportunity to study public relations at the graduate level. Generally, these degree programs are taught by, or under the direction of, well qualified faculty members.

But, overall, the quality of public relations education is spotty. There are few if any common standards to be met; only a handful of programs have been accredited by the American Council on Education for Journalism. For the many thousands of students who are majoring in some other field—public administration, business administration, political science, or the administration of educational, welfare, medical and other specialized institutions—and who require a basic understanding of public relations as a tool of management, there are few opportunities for an introductory course in public relations, and often the students are not encouraged or required to take one when it is available.

After some 30 years of public relations education, there is urgent need for a thorough examination and review of the educational process in respect to preparing people for the practice of public relations, and for managerial and administrative positions so that they will have an appropriate understanding of public relations practice and its values.

This paper proposes a broad study, which hopefully will result in recommendations that will serve to upgrade and professionalize public relations education throughout our country, and also hopefully result in a greater degree of standardization of this educational process.

If the needs for public relations leaders for tomorrow are to be met, if public relations practice is to move further in the direction of professionalization, the educational process must be strengthened and standardized within flexible limits. . . .

Another pertinent section of the Bateman-Cutlip report reads as follows:

If public relations practice has not yet succeeded in becoming a profession—and regrettably but understandably it has not—a portion of the causes may be attributed both to the contemporary practitioners of the art and to the educators who prepare young people for careers in this field.

There are other causes, too, of course. There is the matter of time. Public relations may have roots that go back into history, but as a distinctive activity in our democratic society—as a tool of managerial practice and as an essential element in our mass communications network—the art of public relations in the United States (probably the world's leading country in this field) has origins that date back only to the early years of the present century. Few if any other human activities have attained professional status in such a short period of time, actually less than three-quarters of a century. In short, the art of public relations is still in a congealing state. More time is needed for it to harden into a sharply outlined professional format.

But the passage of time alone will not assure the attainment of professional status for public relations practitioners. Unless educators and practitioners in the field of public relations act together to guide the art into the direction of professionalism, the present practice of public relations may very well level off at a point where the public relations practitioner is hardly more than a messenger boy in the total communications system—a level of operation that presently and unfortunately is all too common.

It is commonly agreed that to attain and hold professional status, the practice of public relations must develop certain characteristics:

(1) It must define the body of knowledge required for professional practice in the field.

(2) It must establish and effectively enforce a code of ethical practice, including necessarily an affirmation of responsibility to the public interest above and beyond any obligations to selfish or private interests.

(3) It must establish a program of educational preparation for the field that assures certain standards of competency for those successfully completing such a program, and it must limit admission to practice—by examination or in other ways—to those who have the appropriate educational preparation and whose basic competence and adherence to ethical standards is reasonably assured.

In all of these areas and others, the determined joint action of educators and public relations practitioners is needed if professionalization of our practice is to be moved along. It is important also that we undertake to recruit more competent teachers who possess both professional experience and advanced degrees and who can gain acceptance of this subject in our universities.

The Commission initially agreed that it would consider five related areas relevant to public relations education. These include:

(1) Curriculum

(2) Qualifications of teachers, and teaching methods

(3) Public relations research and its dissemination

(4) Liaison between public relations practice and the campus

(5) The process of transition from the campus to the profession

It is hoped that the publication of the Commission's recommendations will accomplish several purposes:

(1) Encourage present public relations educators to examine their programs and make desirable changes.

(2) Attract college and university administrators' attention to public relations as a substantive field of study, deserving of stronger support.

(3) Encourage greater interest and participation in the educational process by professional practitioners of public relations.

(4) Encourage the general improvement of professional public relations practice through the establishment of appropriate educational requirements for admission to the field.

BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

Inherent in the Commission's recommendations are some basic assumptions about the process of preparing the student for the professional practice of public relations. Among these assumptions are the following:

(1) That the student should receive a well-rounded education in the liberal arts and humanities, with appropriate emphasis on education in communications and public relations.

(2) That a bachelor's degree level program in public relations education may prepare the student for his first few years of professional practice, but that for those planning a lifetime career in public relations further specialized education at the master's degree level is highly desirable.

(3) That, since public relations practice is to a considerable extent concerned with effective communication (although certainly not to the exclusion of social analysis, management counseling and planning) the appropriate academic milieu for public relations education for professional practice is a school or department of communications or journalism.* While the title "School of Journalism" may seem to be a limiting one, in fact most such schools (or departments) are broader in scope than their titles signify. Furthermore, the relationship between public relations and journalism is still a close one. If journalism may be called the "Fourth Estate," then public relations may in the view of some practitioners be called the "Fifth Estate," inasmuch as it provides the link between the mass media and many of the institutions in our society.

(4) That the recommendations of the Commission should conform in a general way to the accreditation requirement of the American Council on Education for Journalism, the recognized accrediting organization for schools and departments of journalism in the United States. ACEJ requirements are summarized in a memorandum entitled "Guides for Schools or Departments of Journalism and Communications Seeking

*Note: The matter of the business or public administration students who need orientation courses in PR as a tool of management is another problem which will be dealt with later in this report.

Accreditation for the First Time from the American Council on Education for Journalism" as follows:

The program in journalism or communications shall be located in an institution with a four year accredited program in liberal arts and sciences.

The program for education in journalism or communications shall be based on a wide and varied background in the liberal arts and sciences which shall include but shall not be confined to selections in such fields as economics, English, history, languages, literature, philosophy, political science, psychology, sociology, mathematics and the sciences. It is anticipated there will be some requirement of concentration in at least one of these liberal arts and sciences disciplines.

For each sequence a supervisor shall be designated whose academic and professional background is related to that sequence.

A student's college curriculum should consist of approximately one-fourth journalism courses and three-fourths liberal arts and science courses. Professional journalism concentrations should be in the last two years of the undergraduate program. No more than two full-year professional courses should be offered to journalism majors in the freshman and sophomore years.

In connection with ACEJ's three-fourth-one-fourth breakdown, it is important to raise a fundamental question: Should not some so-called journalism courses (even though they are taught in the journalism school) be considered part of the public relations student's general education? These may include such courses as Introduction to Communications, Introduction to Mass Media, Mass Communication and Society, etc.

(5) That the recommendations of the Commission should be guided by but not restricted by existing academic conventions. It is the stated purpose of the Commission to *change* public relations education where it should be changed--not to confirm the *status quo.*

While the Commission has been structured in such a way as to give ultimate control to the educators, the views of the practitioner members of the Commission have had weight in all its considerations.

For this reason it is important at this point to insert into this discussion some general views of the practitioner members on the general subject of public relations education.

It is noteworthy in this connection that all three practitioner members of the Commission have been concerned about the lack of writing skills among the public relations graduates. Mr. Milton Fairman states his view as follows:

"There is a pretty general complaint from employers that the students they hire 'can't write.' My own experience has been that many who can write publicity aren't much good at handling abstract ideas—a skill that is necessary in speech writing, reports and much of the non-publicity writing chores that must be done."

Betsy Ann Plank states a parallel view:

"Public relations educators have long heard practitioners deplore the fact that

public relations graduates 'don't know how to write.' It's puzzling to practitioners/employers since writing is the basic requirement for employment of public relations students and continues to be the essential requisite for advancement and development throughout a public relations career.

"It's difficult for me to believe that public relations educators don't share and understand this viewpoint. Indeed, I think they do share it and understand it.

"It appears to me that the communications breakdown between the education and the practice—and one which is penalizing the individual graduate severely and the concept of education for public relations even more severely—occurs because the opportunity for learning practical writing skills is largely limited to learning to write as a member of the public media—and primarily newspapers.

"Thus what we (practitioners and educators concerned about strengthening education for public relations) are doing is simply reinforcing the traditional, indirect, and outmoded way into the field, i.e., through newspaper experience, or, in this case, through learning to write as a future newspaper staff member. Witness the standard (and usually only) writing courses required in a Public Relations sequence: Newswriting I and II.

"Public relations writing requires more than that—or at least another direction in thinking and writing. This is the essential bridge between newswriting and 'composition' which public relations educators should be providing, in my opinion. A new 'core curriculum' which ignores this need will shortchange future students and court continued disaffection for public relations education on the part of the practitioner. . . .

"Another continuing basic requirement of the public relations professional is the need for persuasive writing and presentation of material to management. It involves organization of research, problem analysis, and development of strategy. It daily affects the degree to which a program will be accepted by management and its motivation by 'bu , budget, and support.'

"The public relations student should be aware that he must be able to express himself in these terms, to communicate and sell management—in writing and orally. And this, too, in my observation, is a skill and practice to which little or no attention is being given in the college classroom."

CURRICULUM RECOMMENDATIONS

The members of the Commission are agreed that the curriculum for the education of the student preparing for admission to the practice of public relations may be pictured as a series of three concentric circles.

The smallest, central circle would enclose those subjects specifically concerned with public relations practice. The second circle, somewhat larger, would encompass related subjects in the general field of communications. The third and largest circle would represent the general liberal arts and humanities background expected of all students.

Additionally, one might envision a satellite or "moon" outside the largest circle, representing a secondary area of concentration for the student (a "minor", so to speak), representative of some special area of public relations practice. Thus, the "minor" might be in the field of business administration for the student who plans to enter corporate public relations; or it might be in the field of public administration for the student who plans to enter governmental public relations, etc.

Let us deal with the educational program for the public relations student by starting with the largest of the three concentric circles, and working toward the core.

THE UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM

GENERAL EDUCATION

The general education of the PR major should include certain studies without fail. These are:

English: (Writing and literature) At least four semesters (two years) and preferably more. In public relations practice, writing is indisputably the basic tool. The word is the atom of the public relations practitioner's world. The word is his or her basic building block. The student majoring in public relations must become as familiar with the use of the word as he is with the functions of his own body.

The social sciences: No PR major should be allowed to graduate without meeting a minimal requirement for certain introductory courses in the social sciences. These may include psychology, sociology, economics, history and

political science. A course in basic economics is particularly desirable for the student who expects to enter the corporate PR field.

The humanities: The future practitioner of public relations needs to have a sympathetic understanding and appreciation of the human potential for greatness as expressed through literature and the arts. A sprinkling of courses in literature, drama, the fine arts and music is eminently desirable.

The natural sciences: One or two introductory courses in biology, physics and geology are desirable. Increasingly, in a world of accelerating technology and scientific advancement, the public relations practitioner must serve as a translator and interpreter of abstract complexities to large audiences in layman's language. Thus, a background in the physical or natural sciences, or in engineering, is necessary in many public relations positions.

Foreign language or area studies: As the world grows smaller, it becomes more and more important in any well-rounded educational program for the student to have a knowledge of at least one foreign language, or of the culture of some other part of the world. While this area of study may not be mandatory, it is particularly important for a PR student who hopes to find a career within a corporation with foreign operations, or in a governmental agency (such as the USIA) which is concerned with international public relations activities.

Statistics: As public relations practice becomes more and more involved in the analysis of social, political and economic trends that affect the traditional institutions that employ public relations staffs, a basic understanding of statistical methods (as applied to research in these areas) becomes essential for the PR practitioner. Certainly, an introductory course in statistical methodology is desirable as part of the general educational background of the future PR practitioner.

Organizational structure and behavior: Since public relations is or ought to be a management function and the chief PR staff man ought to be a member of management, it is important for the PR student to have an understanding of the managerial structure and function of institutions. Such a course should deal with this subject on a broad institutional basis, but with appropriate emphasis on the business organization and the science of management.

The objectives of the program of general education for the public relations major should be to turn out a well-educated individual, who has a general understanding of human achievements and potentials in these areas.

COMMUNICATIONS STUDIES

In the field of communications, as closely related background for his special area of studies, the student majoring in public relations should undertake a program that generally encompasses the following areas:

Theory and Process of Communication: Survey of basic factors affecting human interaction through communication; theories and models of

communication; mass media and interpersonal communication in a dynamic and computerized society.

Writing for the Mass Media: Fundamental writing and fact gathering skills of journalism for the print and electronic media; a course in the basics of news reporting and writing for both the print and electronic media. (N.B. There should be special emphasis on writing for electronic media to (1) balance traditional favor toward writing for print; (2) recognize growing importance of electronic media; (3) prepare student for writing for oral communication.)

Copy Editing: Editing procedures; fundamentals of editing copy for print and electronic media; selection and processing of news and publicity material for dissemination; emphasis on correct grammar, style, reader interest, readability, and clarity.

Graphics of Communication: Origins, development and current uses of various forms of printing, type design and recognition, type harmony and legibility; copy fitting and layout fundamentals; introduction to color reproductions; trends in media typography; design and production of annual reports, leaflets, brochures, booklets, and other forms of communication.

Time and opportunity permitting, the public relations major may also undertake one or more of the following types of communications courses:

Advertising Principles and Practice: Social and economic aspects of advertising; advertising appeals and themes; visualization; preparation of copy and art; advertising research. This should be a highly recommended elective.

Media Law and Ethics: Social and ethical responsibilities in communicating; legal rights and restrictions, including Constitutional guarantees, libel, invasion of privacy, contempt of court, and complex financial reporting requirements.

Feature Writing: Procedures in gathering material for feature stories; analysis of reader appeal, study of feature story structure; development of style by practice in writing feature material.

Introduction to Survey Research: Theory and practice of opinion and marketing survey techniques. Planning, design, sampling, questionnaire construction, interviewing, field operations, analysis of data.

Communication Media Analysis: Methods of investigating the control, content, audience, and effects of press, radio, television, and motion pictures.

PUBLIC RELATIONS CORE STUDIES

Here the public relations major finally focuses on his primary area of interest. But all that has come before, in his general education and in his communications studies, should be involved here. Without such background, whatever he studies in this narrow area could be useless.

As an absolute minimum, the student working for a degree in public relations should accomplish the following core courses of study:

Introduction to Public Relations: Principles, history and practice of public relations in business, educational institutions, social welfare organizations, government and the military services; the processes of influencing public opinion; analyses of public relations programs; the responsibilities of the public relations practitioner to his principals, to the media, to the public; ethics of public relations practice; professional public relations organizations; accrediting of public relations practitioners; career opportunities.

(It should be stressed that this introductory course in public relations *should not be a skills course.* Rather it should strive to give the student a sound appreciation of the public relations function and its role in our society.)

Publicity Media and Campaigns: Use of controlled and uncontrolled (public) media to achieve motivation from various target audiences; theory and nature of materials emanating from a PR department or counseling firm; practical analysis and development of specialized communications materials to gain reaction and support from specialized groups.

Public Relations Case Problems: Case studies and typical public relations problems in industry, labor, education, government, social welfare, and trade associations. Planning and preparation of communications materials for various media; application of public relations techniques.

Internship or Practicum: Actual work experience as an intern with a public relations department or organization; or on a team project assigned by the instructor. Such experience should include analysis of a public relations problem, the drafting of a plan for its resolution, implementation of the plan and evaluation of results.

ELECTIVES

Additionally, where time and opportunity afford, one or more of the following electives should be taken by the student working for a bachelor's degree in public relations:

Management Communications: Practical experience in speaking and writing for organizational communication (memoranda, program planning and presentation, speech writing, report writing and annual reports).

Propaganda and Public Opinion: Background and history of propaganda techniques; use of motivational tools and techniques to achieve public response and reaction; demographic publics and how they can be reached; the sociological and psychological aspects of target audiences.

Magazine Editing: Processes of creative editing, magazine layout; principles, procedures and problems relating to general magazines, company publications, and business journalism.

"SATELLITE" STUDIES

As a "minor" or secondary area of emphasis, the student aiming toward a degree in public relations should endeavor to take at least two courses in a field related to

his special area of public relations interest.

Thus, if he intends to enter the corporate public relations field, he should take courses in business administration (such as management science, advanced economics*, marketing and personnel management). If he is aiming to work in government, then he should take appropriate courses in government and politics (such as principles of public administration, governmental organization and management and political sociology).

Similar programs should be added for students intending to enter the financial public relations area, international public relations and public relations for health and welfare organizations.

It is important that the college or university permit the flexibility in programming that is needed in order for a student to cross departmental or college lines to obtain these additional courses of study.

THE MASTER'S LEVEL CURRICULUM

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Among the relatively few master's degree programs in public relations currently in existence, there are substantial differences among the underlying philosophies and curriculum approaches. Thus, the Commission feels it is not appropriate at this time to recommend specific requirements at the graduate level. However, the following considerations merit the attention of educators who are interested in developing programs leading to a master's degree in public relations.

The Commission takes note of the fact that far too many graduate programs in public relations today are little more than glorified undergraduate programs. Graduate level students should be expected to carry more of the burden for their own education than do undergraduates. Graduate students also should be expected to become acquainted with research methods, to make use of existing research data, and to perform original research. It is also recommended that the student change to another university for his graduate program, to gain a broader perspective of public relations practice.

The curriculum for the graduate student must have a great deal more flexibility than the program for the undergraduate. The master's level program must be more carefully tailored to the graduate student's career objectives and personal interests. Nevertheless, certain basic areas merit attention from all master's level students.

The Commission's recommendations concerning the graduate curriculum for the public relations student at the master's level are based on the following assumptions:

(1) That the student has, at the undergraduate level, accomplished a program

*For the student who expects to have a career as a public relations executive in a business corporation (or in a PR counseling firm that serves business organizations) an advanced course in economics (with emphasis on the economic system that exists in the U.S.A.) is very important if not essential. The student who does not have an understanding of how our economic system works and of its advantages, will be of little value as a corporate PR practitioner and will inhibit his or her advancement.

essentially similar to the recommendations outlined earlier in this report. If he has not, then he should be requested to make up significant deficiencies.

(2) The student should undertake additional study of the relationships between the mass media and society, and the developing trends in this area.

(3) The student should undertake additional study of the ethics and social responsibilities of the public relations practitioner, and to the laws affecting his practice, with special reference to the PR practitioners' obligations to employers (or clients), the mass media, their profession and the public.

(4) The student should focus upon a specific area of public relations practice in which he hopes to specialize (i.e., corporate public relations, political public relations, governmental public relations, medical/scientific public relations, financial public relations and international public relations) and undertake some special study and/or internship in this area.

(5) The student should be required to do some original research in his particular area of interest, resulting in a thesis of acceptable quality.

RECOMMENDED COURSES

To accomplish the requirements outlined in the foregoing assumptions, *the student should be able to select a balanced program from among the following types of courses:*

a. Studies of the Media:

Mass Media and Society: The inter-relationships between media and society; impact of the media on society and its institutions; responsibilities of the media.

Advanced Communications Theory: Special studies and research in advanced theories of communication as related to both the mass media and interpersonal communications. COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE MASS MEDIA IN THE U.S. AND OTHER NATIONS: Influence, regulation or control by governments; access to media by elements of society, and impact of media on society.

b. General Public Relations Studies:

Public Relations Law and Ethics: The special applications of the laws to public relations practice; origin and development of ethical principles for persuasion.

Contemporary Public Relations Problems: These would be case study-type courses concentrating on the current problems facing managements and public relations executives in businesses and other institutions. Obviously, the problems would be changed from year to year, in tune with developments in society. At the present time, such courses might be built around the following subject areas:

Business problems growing out of the ecology movement;
Business problems growing out of the consumer movement;
The crisis of public confidence in government;
Energy needs vs. the conservation movement;
Efforts to deal with the problems of population growth;
Local government responses to community action groups.

Such a course should consist only in part of classroom work; the bulk of the student's time and effort should be devoted to individual study and research, with periodic oral and written reports to his instructor. This course should concentrate the student's attention upon the analytical, counseling and planning aspects of PR practice, with emphasis on the responsibilities of the practitioner to the public, his employer, the media and the profession.

Organization and Management of PR Organizations and Departments: Functional organization patterns; management techniques; budgeting and financial controls, personnel management and fee systems for counseling firms.

Advanced Course in Public Opinion Research and Analysis of Social Trends: A course designed to give the student a working knowledge of public pulse-taking techniques and to acquaint him with sources of information on social trends and developments so as to enhance his ability as an analyst of society in preparation for his counseling role to management.

c. Other Courses

By the time the student has reached the master's level, he should have decided upon the type of PR career that he desires to pursue. Thus, at this time he should undertake appropriate supporting courses in tune with this objective.

If he intends to work in the field of corporate public relations, such studies might include courses in business administration, advanced economics, marketing, corporate finance, business law and consumerism.

If he intends to pursue a career in government, such courses might include public administration, advanced sociology, urban studies and environmental studies.

Obviously, such auxiliary programs cannot be outlined in specific detail. Maximum flexibility is desirable for such an inter-disciplinary approach. But pertinence also is important. Such courses must be related to the student's major interests in relation to his PR career.

Additional work in the basic social sciences may also be advantageous, depending upon how many such courses he has taken as an undergraduate.

d. Thesis Seminar

Finally, the student should develop a plan for original research into one aspect of public relations practice resulting in a thesis—all, of course, under

the direction of a qualified instructor. In the past, it has been the practice of many students to develop their theses around an analysis of one particular public relations project by a corporation or a public relations firm, or some other institution. While this has some merit, insofar as this process may create understanding of both successful techniques, it does not constitute "original research" in the strict sense of that term. Nor, generally speaking, does it add to the general body of public relations knowledge.

There are many areas of public relations practice (to date largely uninvestigated) where original research may pay rich dividends in terms of adding to public relations knowledge.

For example, what are the dis-rhythmic areas between the public relations executive's comprehension of his function and his chief executive's understanding of the PR executive's role? Or, does Newton's second law of motion ("to every action there is always opposed an equal reaction") apply to public relations efforts in persuasion or propaganda? If so, how can this relationship be demonstrated?

More original research on public relations practice is urgently desirable and needs to be implemented, in part at least, through rigid requirements for graduate level students in public relations.

THE DOCTORAL LEVEL IN PR EDUCATION

At this time, only a few doctoral level programs permit or encourage specialization in public relations. More encouragement is needed for Ph.D. programs with specific emphasis on public relations.

If this objective were accomplished, it is likely that most of the students who attained a Ph.D. in public relations would do so with the objective of teaching in the field. Thus, the end result would be an increasing number of PR educators with research competence who will be able to add systematically to the body of knowledge in the field. Such a basic research corps does not now exist (except for a few individuals).

It is desirable that doctoral level programs with a specialization in public relations be encouraged not only in schools of journalism and/or communications, but also in schools of business administration and public administration, and probably even in other specialized schools (international relations and school administration, to name a few).

In the light of the existing requirements for doctoral degrees—varying as they do among different universities—and in the light of the flexibility of inter-disciplinary approaches to such degrees, it is not advisable here to outline specific courses of study for a doctorate in PR.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE STUDENT MAJORING IN BUSINESS, PUBLIC OR EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

The Commission affirms its belief that all students preparing for future posts in management—whether in a corporation or some other institution—should have an introductory course designed to acquaint them with the role of public relations as a

management function, just as they are expected to understand the role of finance, marketing, commercial law, etc. In some cases, the introductory course in PR in a related college of journalism may suffice (provided it is not technique-oriented—see the Commission's recommendation for such a course on Page 11). But, in many cases, it may be more desirable to establish such an orientation course in the school of business administration (or public administration, educational administration, or whatever) specifically for the purpose it is to fill.

We cannot assume that future managers of institutions will have a sound and ethical conception of the public relations function unless such courses are instituted as part of the bachelor's and master's level programs in management.

THE PUBLIC RELATIONS EDUCATOR

A cursory review of present teachers of public relations in colleges and universities in the United States indicates substantial differences in backgrounds, levels of educational attainment, practical experience in the field, research productivity and teaching ability. Far too many PR programs (consisting of two or more core courses) are taught by people with little or no experience in the field. In many institutions with only one course in PR, the course often is taught by a professor from a related discipline (such as journalism) with no practical experience in the broad, professional practice of public relations.

Additionally, most educators teaching PR courses lack higher degrees. Only a handful of educators in charge of sequences leading to a PR degree have doctoral degrees. This is *not* to say that some such courses and sequences taught by instructors with only a bachelor's degree—but frequently with substantial practical experience in the PR field—are not well taught. Indeed, some instructors with substantial practical experience are doing a superb teaching job.

Nevertheless, three deficiencies are widespread:

(1) too few PR educators with doctoral and master's degrees.

(2) too many PR educators with little or no practical experience in the field.

(3) too many PR programs dependent upon a single instructor—thus limiting the students to one teacher's point of view and experience.

A sustained effort is needed to correct these faults. Such an effort needs the joint support of practitioners and educators, through their respective professional organizations. Some of the means of correcting these deficiencies are discussed in the succeeding section.

RELATIONS BETWEEN PRACTITIONERS AND EDUCATORS

Over recent years, there has been a continuing improvement in the relationships between PR practitioners and PR educators, partly as the result of efforts by their respective professional organizations—the Public Relations Society of America and the Public Relations Division of the Association for Education in Journalism.

In addition, many colleges and universities have retained public relations practitioners as part-time instructors. This trend, however, has not reached its optimum level.

Colleges and departments with only one or two faculty members capable of teaching PR should look to the field of practice to round out their PR teaching staffs, thus providing a wider spectrum of views for the student, and adding the advantages of practical experience to the often purely theoretical knowledge of the full-time faculty members. Obviously, in doing this, the colleges should seek out practitioners with some background of training or experience in educational methodology. And where this does not exist, the practitioner should be encouraged to take some methodology instruction.

Additionally, full-time faculty members who teach PR but who lack practical experience should seek out opportunities—during summer vacation, for example—to take part-time jobs in PR departments and counseling firms.

The Commission recommends that the Foundation for Public Relations Research and Education give renewed emphasis to arranging summer fellowships for PR teachers.

One cannot conceive student doctors in schools of medicine being taught entirely by theoreticians—they must also have some of their instruction from practicing physicians and surgeons, professionals who have faced the day-to-day problems of practice. The analogy applies also to education in public relations—and it is particularly pertinent at a time when the practice of and education for public relations are still in a development stage.

Ideally, what is called for is a blending of theory and practice, of the trained educator and the skilled practitioner. Seldom are all of these attributes found in one person. Thus, the ideal faculty for a PR sequence should be constituted of both educators and practitioners. To the extent possible, the educator should have had some practical experience, and the practitioner some training in educational principles. But, in the final analysis, the educator is primarily an educator, and the practitioner is primarily a practitioner. Blended together, as members of an educational team, they can provide the student with the best possible education.

PUBLIC RELATIONS RESEARCH

Basic, original research by PR educators and PR practitioners is noted more for its absence than its existence.

Most PR educators—not having attained the Ph.D. level—have not been required to do such research, have not learned how to do it, or have not been interested in doing it. Most of them, indeed, are teaching skills courses that have little relationship to basic research.

PR practitioners, on the other hand, generally have been too busy at their jobs to engage in basic research, not connected with specific PR tasks.

Over the last two decades, the Foundation for Public Relations Research and Education (an independent foundation established by the Public Relations Society of America) has funded some research projects initiated by a few educators. But limited funds—along with the fact that too few sound projects have been advanced by educators—have restricted the overall results.

Encouraging more Ph.D. programs with a specialization in PR (as has been suggested in the curriculum section of this report) would lead to some increase in research-minded educators. But, other specific recommendations are difficult to make.

Three prerequisites are necessary:

(1) An increasing interest on the part of educators in doing basic research.

(2) A definition of areas that constitute "basic" research in public relations.

(3) A willingness on the part of PR organizations and practitioners to supply the funds for expanded research activities.

MOVING FROM CAMPUS TO PRACTICE

Other professions, such as medicine and law, have developed a formalized process for moving from campus to the field of practice.

If public relations is ever to achieve professional status, this process must be formalized to a much greater extent than is presently the case. At present, with the educational standards for PR still so varied and disparate, it is too soon to recommend a transitional process in PR comparable to that for doctors and lawyers, although as things now stand, graduates of public relations sequences are permitted to apply for pre-associate membership in PRSA.

However, the Commission recommends that when a student completes his bachelor's degree program in a PR sequence that has been accredited by the American Council for Education in Journalism (ten such sequences have been approved to date), he should immediately be allowed to apply for active accredited membership in PRSA and to take the accreditation examination of the Public Relations Society of America.* If he passes it, he should be admitted to active accredited membership in PRSA. This would provide a close, direct connective link between the campus and the profession. There is no more reason to make the PR graduate wait (and have several years' experience) to take his accreditation exam than there is for the law school graduate to be made to wait –and gain experience– before taking his state bar examination.

Furthermore, such a process would encourage more schools to develop their PR sequences in line with this Commission's curriculum recommendations and submit them for accreditation by ACEJ.

*Mr. Milton Fairman, a member of the Commission, dissents from this point of view, in these words:

"I am uneasy about the proposal that PRSA accreditation immediately follow graduation. There should be a period in which a graduate determines whether this is the career for him and an employer decides whether he has the right man. Having accredited PRSA people floating about in other jobs does not advance the cause of professionalism."

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–J. Carroll Bateman
–Scott Cutlip
Co-Chairmen